

MM 99-25

MM



REC-1

SEP 8

MM 99-25
ORIGINAL
Dear Mr Kennard,
S-21-99
Tacoma Catholic Worker
Guadalupe House Of Hospitality
1417 So G St
Tacoma WA 98405
EX PARTE OR LAT

Enclosed Please Find A Clipping Of A
Story From Our Local Paper About Your
Decision Whether To Allow Small Local
Radio Stations.

I Very Much Urge You To Please Do!
It Would Be Wonderful To Be Able To
Have Radio, Like In This Article, That
Reflects Local Communities, And ^(our) ~~the~~ Not
Always Very Commercial, Needs.

Please Support This Idea!

I Also Understand That As You Decide
On These stations, You're Faced With Whether
To Allow Existing, Currently Illegal
stations To Continue Under New
Rules.

FILED I Believe There Are Rules For Good
Reasons, And I Think The New Rules
Are Trying To Meet Needs These Illegal
stations Have Tried To show. But I
Don't Think We Should Forbid People
Who've led us to see possibilities for
better community radio from being
part of new legal stations.

That would be as if when the Civil-
Rights Movement had pushed and changed
the laws on segregated buses, Rosa Parks
still had to ride on the back of the bus
because she broke the old law! That
doesn't seem right.

If you must, Punish people who
cause trouble (Big and small Broadcasters)
But Good Faith Activists who care about
their communities should not be

→
(over please)

Local areas want own FM

Vashon Island and communities across U.S. want low-power stations

By KALPANA SRINIVASAN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - Vashon Island, which is about 15 miles long, has two police cars, one fast-food chain and depends on a ferry system to link it to the mainland.

But, insists resident William Morosoff, the island still has a vibrant culture - kept alive by artists, activists and local merchants - and one that should be represented by its very own radio station. He wants the Federal Communications Commission to adopt rules that would create thousands of new low-power FM radio stations across the country.

"The only time I hear the word Vashon on the radio or TV is if there is a serious ferry problem," says Morosoff, an aerospace consultant who runs a bed and breakfast on the island. "The island is considered a nonplace."

In one of the most active outpourings of public comment the FCC has seen, more than 2,500 interested parties have submitted their thoughts on an agency proposal offered earlier this year that would enable "micro" radio broadcasters to operate with low power levels from 1 watt to 1,000 watts, far

less powerful than big-city stations that can boast 50,000 watts of power.

The FCC stopped licensing low-powered FM radio stations around 1978 to help solidify regular FM stations. But FCC Chairman Bill Kennard and others have pushed for the proposal to help increase the diversity of voices on the airwaves. It could be months before a decision is made.

The variety of the applicants is as unusual as the number: a Korean-language radio station, an Islamic charity foundation and a suburban public library all back the idea.

But opponents of the plan also have formed a strong coalition, from the industry that makes radios to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Commercial broadcasters have compiled hundreds of pages of documentation arguing that low-power radio stations could degrade service to listeners. A study commissioned by the National Association of Broadcasters surveyed the impact of relaxing the buffer zones around existing stations to make room for new low-power ones.

Engineers, testing 28 common radios including car and clock radios, determined that low-power radio could cause significant interference with existing stations. A study by the Consumer Electronics Manufacturers Association, with support from National Public Radio and the Cor-

poration for Public Broadcasting, reached similar conclusions.

Low-power radio proponents led by the National Lawyers Guild Committee on Democratic Communications commissioned their own study, which concluded that there is some leeway in FCC's current interference rules and that low-power stations will create less interference than that caused by some existing licensed stations.

But broadcasters also argue that regulators are jumping the gun by introducing low-power stations without knowing how these stations will impact digital radio, when that service is introduced.

"Where is the public interest in rushing to provide a new class of radio to serve a few listeners before knowing how it would affect future digital service to all listeners?" said Eddie Fritts, president of NAB.

Nonetheless, the proposal has piqued the imagination of hundreds around the country, who believe a local radio station would serve a unique community function at a relatively small price, as low as \$2,500 for a 1-watt station to \$100,000 and up for a 1,000-watt station.

Sandra Feinberg, executive director of the Middle Country Public Library in Centereach, N.Y., sees a station headquartered at the library as an innovative way to draw in more of

25 voices

the community's residents, particularly young adults.

"It's hard to attract kids to libraries," admits Feinberg. Young adults would also gain from the hands-on experience by helping to run the station, she said.

By airing storytelling sessions and speeches by featured lecturers, the library could extend its reach to home-bound residents, she added.

"There is very little left of small communities," says Feinberg. "I think this would just emphasize that role that we play even more."

Others see a low-power station not as an enhancement but as a necessity for their areas.

On Orcas Island, local disaster response groups say such a station is needed to keep residents informed about serious weather conditions.

Gary Bennett, district chief of the volunteer fire department, recalls two cases - a huge snowstorm incapacitating people several years ago and a power outage about 10 years ago - when residents relied on word of mouth to find out what was going on.

"It was basically neighbor talking to neighbor," Bennett said.

But people on the island need to know if the ferry they depend on to get to other islands or the mainland is out of service, says Bennett.

"What we need is good local information," Bennett said.



ED BETZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sandra Feinberg, a library official in Centereach, N.Y., wants a radio station to be part of the library-cultural center if the FCC approves.